

When studying Maslow, Deming, and Taylor, one thing is clear: needs lead to motivation. If there is a need and a desire to learn, then the subject will be motivated enough to do so. Although educators debate whether to add a fifth year to the high school education, it is clear to see that school should not be extended another year; longevity is not the incorrect variable in the equation, motivation is.

Studies indicate that more and more American students are entering college with nominal requirements or are not attending college at all. Trends in test scores show students don't know what they should know. Meanwhile that malignant fad continues to rock our nation: the high school dropout. Yet who is to say that thirteen instead of twelve years of education will make a difference?

How many times as a student have you blamed a bad grade on an unfair test? Or as a parent how many times have you heard complaints from your teenager about the insufficient qualifications, and underdeveloped teaching techniques of his or her teacher as an explanation for a bad grade? Students have armed themselves with excuses for their academic performances that place the blame far from their own poor efforts. If students had motivation and a desire to learn instead of excuses, the duration of schooling could actually be cut down a couple of years instead of extended as some educators propose.

The problem in our school system is the way students approach their own education. I can attest that often students do work just for the grade and not to retain knowledge. Is that any way to learn? Perhaps that is why the United States is one of the nations with the highest illiteracy rates. Although at times schools may be responsible for decisions not in the students' best interest (for example, the football coach teaching Geometry because the school could not afford to look for a better qualified employee), it's important to note that more often my fellow students and I may not care enough to put any effort into our own education, thus depriving ourselves of knowledge and a future.

While educators debate adding a year to high school, the real issue lies untouched and students' apathy remains unchallenged. Whether they spend twelve, thirteen, or thirty years in the educational system, nothing is more important than motivation in order for students to achieve all that is expected of them.